

[0020] In step 204, when the purchaser 102 wants to buy digital information, e.g., computer software, music, literature, audio and/or video information, etc., the purchaser contacts the seller 104, for example over the Internet or via telephone but the invention is not limited thereto. Once the seller 104 and the purchaser 102 have agreed to the sale of the digital information, the seller 104 retrieves the purchaser's public key from either the purchaser 102 or the database 110. The seller then encrypts the digital information using the purchaser's public key on the seller's computer system 105 in step 206. The seller then sends the encoded digital information 114 to the purchaser by uploading/downloading the encoded digital information 114 to the purchaser's computer system 103, mailing the encoded digital information on a CD to the purchaser, or the like. The purchaser 102 then pays the trusted third party 106 for the digital information and the trusted third party pays the seller 104.